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This checklist presents 166 species of birds known to have occurred within the boundaries of Pinnacles National Monument since its establishment in 1908. Much of the information contained in the checklist is based on the field work conducted in the monument by Michael L. Avery and Charles van Riper III from November 1983 through May 1986. Checklist data was updated by Shelley Buranek from 1997 to 1999, when she resurveyed observation points and plots used originally by Avery and van Riper, and compared their abundance, breeding, and habitat data with her own. Additional data were obtained from a landbird inventory conducted by Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) staff in 2001-02, Kent Van Vuren's annotated checklist for San Benito County (2005), several published accounts of birding trips to the monument (including Roland Wauer, 1968), and from unpublished records kept by former monument personnel, particularly in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Finally, presence of bird species within the monument was updated in 2002-05 by park staff including Gavin Emmons, Amy Fesnock, Paul Johnson, and David Soto, based on analysis of historic and current observation and breeding records for avian species. Gavin Emmons also verified rare bird records in personal communications with R.J. Adams, Kent Van Vuren, and PRBO staff including Diana Humple.

The relatively small area (about 27,000 acres) encompassed by the monument contains a variety of habitat types which support a diverse assemblage of birds. 54 species are considered year-round residents in the monument, and there are breeding records for 74 species. An additional 17 species may nest here, but documentation is lacking.

Included in the list are the California Condor (federally listed "Endangered") and the Peregrine Falcon (federally de-listed from "Endangered" in 1999), both of which were regularly seen in the past, but which are now seldom seen. These are included in the 14 species of concern that occur in the monument, signified by a "^" next to the common names. There are 4 exotic species on the list: Chukar, Wild Turkey, European Starling, and House Sparrow. These are indicated by a "~" next to the common names.

Common and scientific names of species follow the 1998 American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds, 7th edition, and the 42nd supplement (2000) to the Check-list. Following common and scientific names for each species on the checklist are columns which give the following information: 1.) abundance by month, habitat, and in general; and 2.) the breeding status of the species.



## HABITAT TYPES

The following habitat descriptions are intended as a general guide to the distribution of bird species in the monument. For each habitat type indicated for a species, abundance is documented.

**Ch - CHAPARRAL:** shrub-dominated habitat that covers over 80% of the monument. The predominant shrub species varies with site characteristics. Chamise chaparral occurs on the dry south- and west-facing slopes; holly-leaf cherry chaparral is found in moister ravines and north-facing slopes; and mixed chaparral, with components of buckbrush and manzanita, occurs on north-facing slopes not suitable for holly-leaf cherry.

**Cl - CLIFFS, ROCKS, AND RIDGES:** sheer rocky outcroppings, for which the monument was named, provide ideal habitat for several bird species.

**G - GRASSLAND:** dominated by exotic annual grass species, these areas were formally pastures and were probably created by burning and clearing of native woody vegetation.

**O - OAK / PINE WOODLANDS:** on hillsides, the dominant tree species is blue oak; in flat areas, such as near the east entrance to the monument, the valley and coast oaks are the main species. Gray pine and California juniper are frequent associates of the oaks. Most blue oak stands in the monument have a shrub understory of species such as buckbrush, mountain mahogany, and redberry.

**R - RIPARIAN:** restricted to a narrow belt along major creeks and streams in the monument. The vegetation is variable, with sycamore, cottonwood, willow, gray pine, and coast live oak each dominating at certain sites. In contrast, some open, sandy stretches of Chalone Creek are virtually devoid of woody vegetation. Included in the habitat type is Bear Gulch Reservoir, the only permanent standing water in the monument.

## DATA FOR ACCIDENTAL RECORDS

**Western Grebe** - 1 record, 12/5/1961 (Warren). On roadway near Chalone Campground, transported to and released at Bear Gulch Reservoir.

**American White Pelican** - 4 records, 1/27/1991 (B.J. Femmel), 2/25/2002 (D. Soto), Sep 2004 (A. Abate), Nov 2004 (P. Johnson). Observed respectively over Machete Ridge, Mt. Defiance, and the High Peaks for the last two records.

**Common Merganser** - 1 record, 5/16/2003 (G. Emmons). Observed on west end of Reservoir.

**Swainson's Hawk** - 4 records, Feb 1984 (M. Avery & C. Van Riper), 4/28/1990 (J. & N. Aguiloon), 2/21/2002 (B. Kinkade), 3/28/2002 (A. Grant). Observed respectively over Chalone Creek, over Hawkins Peak, and North Chalone Peak for the last two records.

**Mountain Quail** - 1 record, 5/1/1983 (K. & K. Van Vuren).

**Virginia Rail** - 1 record, 8/27/1958 (R. Wauer). Observed near the Chalone Creek bridge.

**Greater Yellowlegs** - 4 records, 3/22/2000 (P. Johnson), 3/26/2000 (P. Johnson et al), 4/8/2002 (P. Johnson et al), 4/16/2002 (P. Johnson). First two records at Chalone Creek (upstream from maintenance complex, and near Peaks View parking area, respectively), last 2 records at Bear Gulch Reservoir.

**Lesser Yellowlegs** - 1 record, April 1982 (M. Avery & C. Van Riper).

**Western Sandpiper** - 2 records, 12/26/1998 (Christmas count), 12/27/2000 (Christmas count).

**White-winged Dove** - 1 record, Oct 1953 (M. Avery & C. Van Riper).

**Black Swift** - 1 record, 5/19/1994 (G. Volkman). Observed at Chalone Creek just downstream of maintenance complex.

**Calliope Hummingbird** - 2 records, 3/14/1993 (N. Lethaby), 4/24/1993 (N. Lethaby).

**Hammond's Flycatcher** - 1 record, 4/18/1997 (N. Lethaby).

**Bell's Vireo** - 2 records, May 6-7, 1972 (B. & S. Gerow), May 21-23 (D.S. Sparks).

**Clark's Nutcracker** - 2 records, 9/10/1935 (Grinnell & Miller), 1/3/1998 (D. Ekdahl). Second record documented at Bear Gulch Visitor Center.

**Northern Mockingbird** - 4 records, May 1955 (M. Avery & C. Van Riper), April 1973 (M. Avery & C. Van Riper), 12/8/2002 (W. Artz), 6/1/2002 (T. Haff). Last 2 records observed respectively on pine tree near Bear Gulch Visitor Center, and near the west entrance to the park during a Point Reyes Bird Observatory landbird inventory.

**Northern Waterthrush** - 1 record, 9/1/1954 (B. & B. Jackson).

**Golden-winged Warbler** - 1 record, 5/30/2005 (N. Weber). Record of adult male confirmed visually in riparian area across from East Side entrance meadow.

**Hooded Warbler** - 1 record, 5/8/2001 (S. Scoggin). Record confirmed visually at South Chalone Peak during a Point Reyes Bird Observatory landbird inventory.

**Green-tailed Towhee** - 2 records, 4/24/1954 (W. Livingstone), 9/22/1954 (B. Jackson).

**White-throated Sparrow** - 4 records, 12/29/1996 to 1/8/1997 (K. Van Vuren), Dec 2000 (Christmas count), 12/29/2001 (Christmas count), 3/20/1999. The last record was by an unlisted observer, documented at the Pinnacles Campground in a flock with Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows.

**Cassin's Finch** - 1 record, 3/16/1997 (N. Lethaby).

**Evening Grosbeak** - 2 records, Feb 1901 (Grinnell & Miller), Mar 1901 (Grinnell & Miller).

**House Sparrow** - 3 records, May 1955, May 1957, 6/30/2002 (R. DiGaudio). The last record was documented near the west entrance to the park during a Point Reyes Bird Observatory landbird inventory.



☐ ....breeding confirmed through the presence of an active nest.

The likelihood of encountering a given species depends on several factors including habitat type, season, time of day, and weather conditions. The following categories indicate the relative probability of recording a species in the proper habitat at the appropriate time of year.

^ - species of concern, including federally endangered and threatened species.  
 ~ - introduced / exotic species not native to the monument.

[illegible]







[illegible]







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**A CHECKLIST OF BIRDS**  
OF  
PINNACLES NATIONAL MONUMENT

COMPILED BY GAVIN EMMONS

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C A L I F O R N I A

PUBLISHED BY WESTERN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION  
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